

The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 30 August 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
30 AUGUST 1968

1. Czechoslovakia -
Soviet Union

Two versions of the "complete" Moscow agreement were passed to the US Embassy in Prague yesterday. Both contain references to a gradual troop withdrawal, an end to anti-Soviet propaganda, and an annulment of the special party congress called after the invasion. One version [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] states Moscow will control implementation of the Cierna and Bratislava agreements, that Soviet advisers will be assigned throughout the defense establishment, and that Prague's foreign policy must be coordinated with the "Warsaw Five." This report looks plausible.

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2. Guatemala

Ambassador Mein's killers are still at large, although the government is conducting a massive manhunt. House-to-house searches are continuing in Guatemala City, police are rounding up known extremists, the country's borders have been closed, and a curfew imposed. A state of siege has been declared, suspending political and some civil liberties for 30 days.

The Communist terrorists responsible for the murder issued a bulletin yesterday stating the ambassador had been "executed" during a kidnap attempt. The Communists said they had planned the kidnapping in retaliation for the capture of their leader, Camilo Sanchez. The bulletin warned Ambassador Mein's death "is only the first of a series of measures" unless Camilo is produced alive and in court.

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3. Israel-Egypt

Moshe Dayan is now threatening "the most severe retaliation" unless Egypt apologizes and makes amends for the Monday night raid across the Suez Canal. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Cairo is not likely to accept Dayan's terms. The chances are considerably better than even that the Israelis will hit Egypt or Jordan or both within the next few weeks.

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Both Egypt and Jordan have increased their alert measures. A firing incident yesterday in the northern Suez Canal area probably has made the Egyptians even more nervous.

4. Panama

Arias leaves tomorrow on a trip that will take him to Germany, France, and the US before his inauguration on 1 October. He is likely to bring up the subject of more US aid--in the \$40 million range--and he may also sound out the French on economic assistance.

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The United States Intelligence Board has just approved a National Intelligence Estimate entitled Panama: Prospects for Relations with the US. This estimate concludes that Arias apparently is convinced that reasonably harmonious relations with the US are essential. He is committed, however, to renegotiating the present canal treaty drafts. The major areas of contention during these negotiations will probably be over issues of Panamanian sovereignty and the size of the US presence.

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5. Philippines

Relations with Malaysia will sour even more if Marcos signs a bill tossed in his lap yesterday by the congress. This bill has a rider describing Sabah as "territory over which the Republic of the Philippines has acquired dominion and sovereignty." The Malaysians, who hold this disputed portion of northern Borneo, are already saying the bill puts the lie to Manila's claims of friendship. If Marcos ignores or vetoes the bill, he becomes the target of wrath at home.

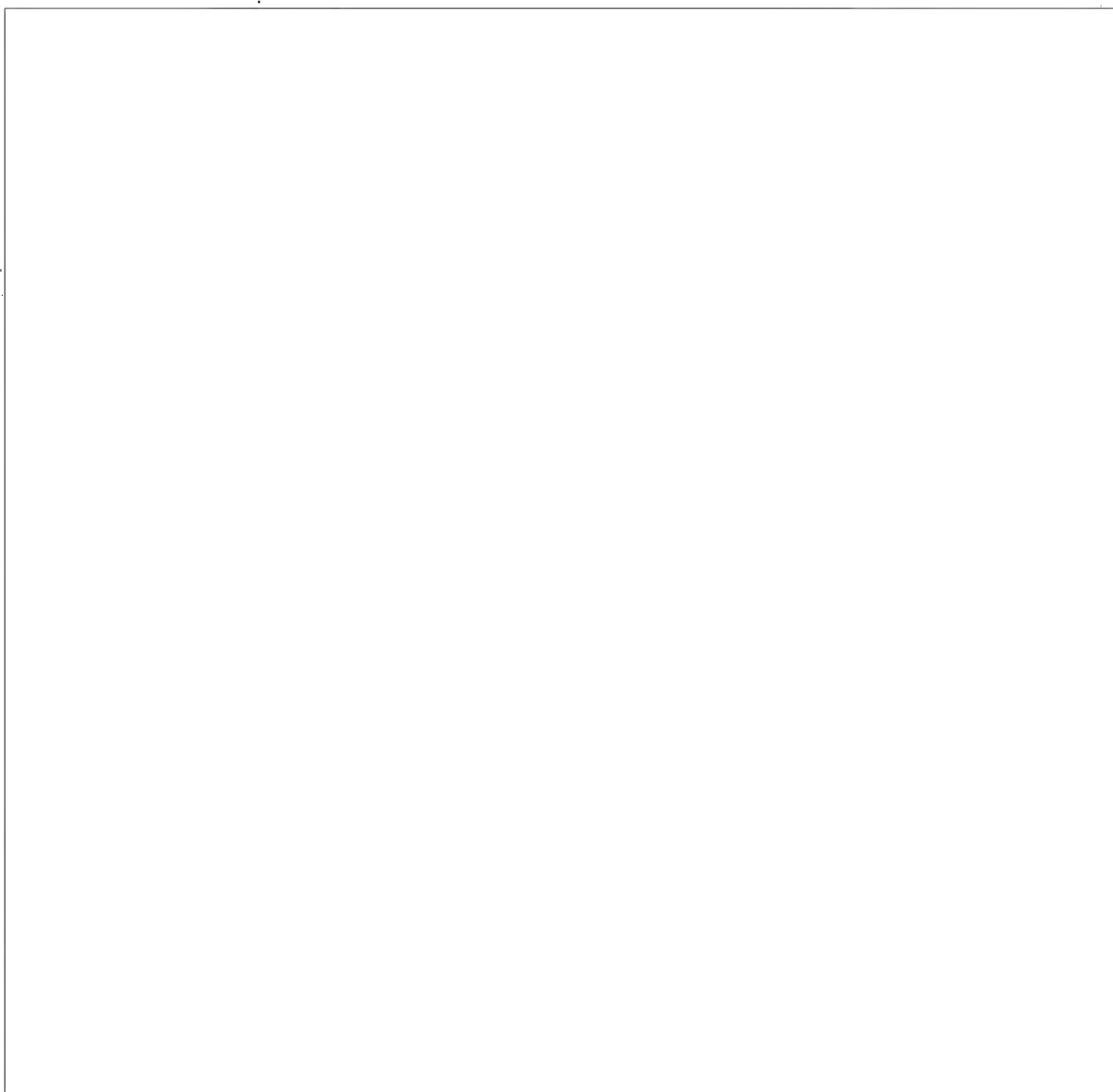
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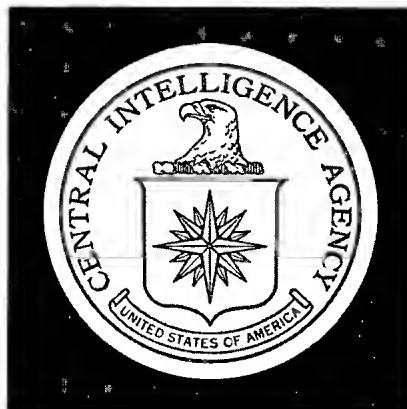


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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S
Political Attitudes



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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

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Artilleryman Describes Air Defense: Excerpts from a recently captured document have provided further insight into enemy antiaircraft tactics used against US aircraft bombing in the Hanoi area during 1967. The document apparently belonged to an artilleryman previously attached to a light antiaircraft battery near Hanoi.

According to the document, US Air Force planes "attack fiercely" but their raids are "quite short." They tend to fly a tight formation as they approach the target, but then fan out into small groups in a perpendicular line for their final attack.

On the other hand, US Navy planes break off in many directions when approaching their targets and use "diversionary tactics," launching simultaneous strikes at both primary and secondary targets. Such tactics, according to the document, are confusing and make it difficult to differentiate between the attacking and the diversionary aircraft.

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The document indicates that the enemy makes extensive efforts to instill a strong sense of discipline in antiaircraft troops, both in regard to firing tactics and in the necessity to stick to their guns even when their position has been hit by US flak suppression attacks. One passage, for example, states that "no matter how great the losses are, the company should be determined to fight until the end, even if only one or two guns are available."

Tactics vary with the clock. In daytime, batteries apparently open up after receiving a signal, even before they see or hear approaching enemy aircraft. This creates what is commonly referred to as a "flak trap" by US pilots. Batteries are allowed to fire at departing enemy aircraft only if they are within range of their guns. Antiaircraft crews operating during darkness are instructed not to fire until they actually observe the enemy.

These same notes provide the first tenuous indication that the North Vietnamese may be transferring some experienced antiaircraft personnel from Hanoi's air defense system to South Vietnam. They appear to have been written by a first-line field officer, and were captured in western Thua Thien Province on 28 May, when the bombing restriction was two months old.

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Havana and Hanoi Sign Economic Pact: The governments of Cuba and North Vietnam have signed an economic cooperation agreement in Hanoi--winding up North Vietnam's annual economic aid campaign. No details of the protocol were given in the Hanoi Radio announcement.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

Hanoi on American Politics: Further comment on the US political scene was broadcast on 28 August by Radio Hanoi in Vietnamese to South Vietnam. The radio quoted an article by "Commentator" in the party daily charging that "violent" eruptions at the Democratic convention had forced the Johnson administration to "step up its deceitful propaganda" to "soothe" public opinion and defend US policy on Vietnam. Citing the "growing indignation" of US and world opinion at US "stubbornness," the article predicted that the Johnson administration would encounter continually stiffening opposition if it persists in its refusal to end unconditionally the bombing and all other acts of war against North Vietnam.

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